

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 4, 2017

The Honorable John Culberson  
Chairman  
House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science and Related Agencies  
H-310, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable José E. Serrano  
Ranking Member  
House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Serrano:

As the Committee begins writing the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request funding for implementation of the National Instant Background Check Systems (NICS) Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 (Pub. L. No. 110-180) at least at the Senate-passed level of \$75 million. The Act provides for grants to states to upgrade their electronic databases, incentives for states to transmit electronic records to NICS, penalties for states that do not comply, and requirements for keeping NICS up-to-date, including the removal of obsolete or erroneous records. The Act also provides financial incentives for states to develop "relief from disabilities" procedures for persons who have lost the right to possess a firearm due to a mental health adjudication or commitment but are later determined not to pose a danger to public safety.

As you are aware, the Gun Control Act of 1968 (Pub. L. No. 90-618) precludes certain persons, including felons, those adjudicated mentally ill, illegal aliens, drug abusers, and those under a restraining order, from purchasing or possessing firearms. The only way to enforce these requirements effectively is to ensure that NICS has up-to-date records from state and federal sources. At present, millions of records are currently missing from the various databases that make up NICS. Many states do not have the resources necessary to implement the technology to automate criminal history and mental health records, which has allowed persons otherwise prohibited from purchasing or owning firearms to do so in violation of federal law. This remains a serious problem because many states still do not submit adequate numbers of mental health and criminal records to make NICS work as intended.

The intent of NICS Improvement Amendments Act is to ensure there are sufficient resources to provide accurate and timely data about persons prohibited from possessing firearms. This cannot be achieved absent adequate funding for NICS. In fact, demand for this funding is increasing every year and we must provide adequate funding to meet this growing need. While the Act authorized a combined total of \$1.125 billion from FY 2009 through FY 2013, a total of only \$63.567 million was appropriated during that time.

We fully understand the current constraints on the federal budget and appropriations process. Keeping citizens safe, however, must be Congress's top priority. The NICS Improvement Amendments Act has been severely underfunded in years past, and the-all-too-frequent tragedies across our Nation unfortunately show that gun violence is still a very serious issue that plagues our country. Ensuring NICS has complete and timely information to keep firearms out of the hands of persons who cannot safely and legally possess them while at the same time protecting Americans' Second Amendment rights will save lives. Consequently, we respectfully urge the Committee to fund the NICS Improvement Amendments Act at a level that at minimum of \$75 million.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. For additional information, please contact [jennifer.goedke@mail.house.gov](mailto:jennifer.goedke@mail.house.gov) (Rep. Thompson, 5-3311).

Sincerely,

  
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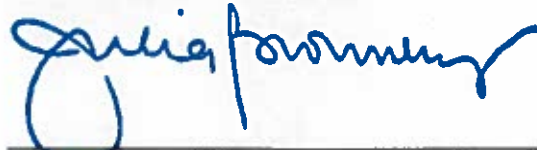
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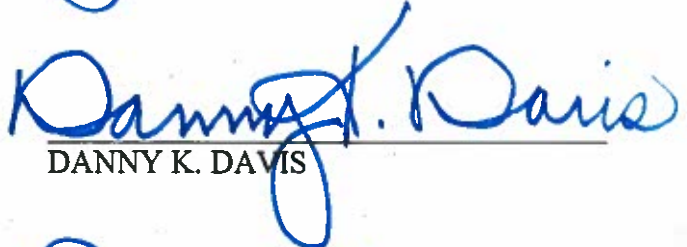
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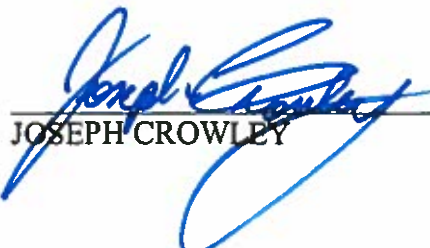
  
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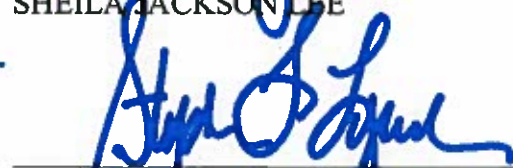
  
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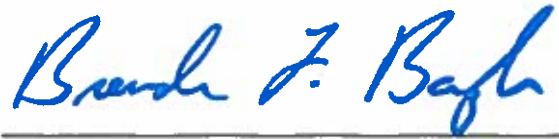
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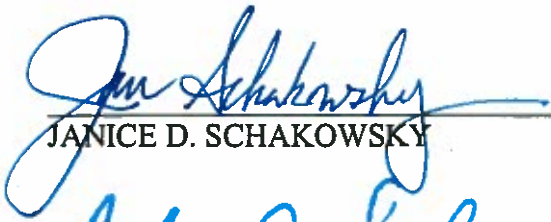
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